PIVOT LINK FOR SHEET BENDING BRAKE AND SHEET BENDING BRAKE INCLUDING PIVOT LINK

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/440,676 filed January 17, 2003.

Field of the Invention

[0002] The subject invention relates to a sheet bending brakes, and more particularly to a guide member reacting between a clamping member and a pivoting arm for moving the pivoting arm between the open and clamped positions.

Background of the Invention

[0003] Various sheet bending brakes are known and used for bending and cutting metal or vinyl sheet work-pieces such as those used for siding on homes and buildings in the industry today. A typical sheet bending brake functions by clamping a work piece between clamping members and using a hinged bending arm to bend the work-piece about the clamping member.

[0004] A sheet bending brake disclosed in the United States Publication No. 2002/0124621 (the '0124621 publication) shows a guide mechanism reacting between a clamping member and a pivoting arm for moving the pivoting arm between the open position and the clamped position of the sheet bending brake. The guide mechanism includes a detent between the open and the clamped positions for providing an intermediate clamping position for adjusting the position of and precisely aligning the work piece. However, the clamping member disclosed in the '0124621 publication is not self-adjustable, but instead must be tuned as before.

[0005] Hence, the sheet bending brake disclosed in the '0124621 publication, although an improvement, did not overcome the inadequacies that characterize sheet bending brakes in the area of a need to manually tune the overall mechanism to accurately

perform work functions on the work-piece as the sheet metal brake was used over a period of time. Accordingly, one of the opportunities of continuous development and research is the area of a more advanced design of a pivot link that may eliminate the need of manual adjustment and provide greater accuracy in using the sheet metal brake over time.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[0006] The subject invention provides pivot link for a sheet bending brake assembly for securing a work-piece, wherein the pivot link includes a body having top and bottom ends, and sidewalls. The bottom end of the pivot link has a pocket defined therewithin, and slots defined within the sidewalls of the bottom end and inwardly extending from the side walls to the center line and connected with the pocket. The pivot link includes a spring positioned within the pocket extending internally from the bottom end towards the top end and a bolt pivotably securing the bottom end within the pivoting arm. The bolt, slided through the slots, is positioned below the spring to keep the spring within the pocket. The bolt travels within the slots from a first to a second end, compressing and releasing the spring.

[0007] In the alternative embodiment of the present invention, the pivot link includes a bar, having a cylindrical shape and formed from a vulcanized rubber. The bar includes a cavity defined within one of the respective ends to receive a washer embedded within the cavity. The bar is positioned within the pocket extending internally from the bottom end towards the top end of the body.

[0008] The advantages of the present invention provides for a new design that is simpler to manufacture. The invention does not require the adjustment by the operator wherein thicker material can be placed in the brake and the spring or the bar positioned within the pivot link adjusts the link without need of the operator's help.

[0009] Accordingly, the pivot link shown in the present invention is new, efficient, and provides for an effective way to overcome the inadequacies of the related art sheet bending brakes.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] Other advantages of the present invention will be readily appreciated as the same becomes better understood by reference to the following detailed description when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein:

[0011] Figure 1 is a perspective view of a pivot link assembly;

[0012] Figure 2 is a perspective view of the pivot link connected with a handle in a close mode of operation of a sheet bending brake;

[0013] Figure 3 is a perspective view of the pivot link connected with the handle in an open mode of operation of the sheet bending brake;

[0014] Figure 4 is another perspective view of the pivot link assembly;

[0015] Figure 5 is still another perspective view of the pivot link assembly;

[0016] Figure 6 is a side view of the pivot link assembly;

[0017] Figure 7 is another perspective view of the pivot link assembly;

[0018] Figure 8 is a perspective view of the sheet bending brake being closed;

[0019] Figure 9 is a perspective view of the sheet bending brake being opened;

[0020] Figure 10 is still another perspective view of the pivot link;

[0021] Figure 11 is still another perspective view of the pivot link;

[0022] Figure 12 is yet another perspective view of the pivot link'

[0023] Figure 13 is still another perspective view of the pivot link that shows a bolt positioned within the body of the pivot link;

[0024] Figure 14 is an exploded perspective view of an alternative embodiment of the

pivot link featuring a rubber bar;

[0025] Figure 15 is still another perspective view of the pivot link that shows the bolt positioned within the body of the pivot link; and

[0026] Figure 16 is another exploded perspective view of the alternative embodiment of the pivot link.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0027] Referring to the Figures, wherein like numerals indicate like or corresponding parts throughout the several views, a sheet bending brake assembly for securing a work piece is generally shown at **20**.

[0028] With particular reference to Figure 2, the sheet bending brake assembly **20** includes a clamping member **22** having a lower leg **24** extending therefrom. The clamping member **22** is generally a C-shaped frame member and has an upper leg **26** extending therefrom. As seen in Figure 2, a plurality of longitudinally spaced clamping members **22** form the assembly **20** and allow for engaging differently sized work pieces, as will be described below. However it is to be understood that any number of clamping members **22** may be utilized with the subject invention. Figures 2-3 and 9-12 illustrate a single clamping member **22** that forms the sheet bending brake assembly **20**. It should be appreciated that each of the frame members is substantially identical. Preferably, the clamping members **22** are made of lightweight aluminum to facilitate transportation of the sheet bending brake assembly **20**. However, different materials may be utilized for providing additional support to the assembly **20** as is known in the art of sheet bending brakes.

[0029] A pivoting arm **30** is pivotally supported by and extends from the clamping member **22**. The pivoting arm **30** defines a clamping area **32** with the lower leg **24**. The

clamping area **32** has a throat depth **25** and forms a working pocket **27**. Designing the C-shaped frame member differently can alter both the throat depth **25** and working pocket **27**. The pivoting arm **30** has a secured end **34** and a free end **36**, such that a bolt **38** extends through the secured end **34** and into the clamping member **22**. The pivoting arm **30** is moveable between an open position and a clamped position by pivoting about the bolt **38** while moving between the open position and the clamped position. In the illustrated embodiment, the pivoting arm **30** includes first and second arms **31A**, **31B**.

[0030] An upper clamping surface **40** is connected to the free end **36** of the pivoting arm **30** and a lower clamping surface **42** is connected to the lower leg **24**. The upper clamping surface **40** and the lower clamping surface **42** engage one another in the clamped position to secure the work piece therebetween. The opening between the upper clamping surface **40** and the lower clamping surface **42** is commonly referred to as a mouth opening. After the work piece is secured, the upper and lower clamping surfaces **40**, **42** create a bending surface **44** that the work piece is bent about. Additionally, the sheet bending brake assembly **20** may be used with a tool cutter (not shown) for cutting the work piece while in the clamped position. It is to be understood that many different tools known in the art of sheet bending brakes may be utilized with the subject invention.

[0031] As shown in Figure 2, a base **46** supports the clamping members **22** and provides support to the assembly **20** while moving the pivoting arm 30 between the open position and the clamped position. The base **46** includes a front rail **48** and a rear rail **50** defining a table **52** such that the clamping members **22** are supported by the front rail **48** and the rear rail **50**. The table **52** has a first table end **54** and a second table end **56**. The table **52** may be portable or may connected to a wheel mechanism (not shown).

The assembly **20** further includes a guide mechanism **58** reacting between the clamping member **22** and the pivoting arm **30** for moving the pivoting arm **30** between the open position and the clamped position.

[0032] The guide mechanism **58** is coupled to a handle **60**. The guide mechanism includes at least one pivot link **62**. The handle **60** is rotatably coupled to the at least one pivot link **62**. As best can be seen in Figures 2 and 3, the handle **60** extends from the guide mechanism **58** for facilitating movement of the pivoting arm **30** between the open and the clamped positions. The handle **60** functions to move the pivoting arm **30**, thereby rotating the guide mechanism **58**. The handle **60** may be a single lever for a single clamping member **22** or a long bar engaging the plurality of clamping members **22** as shown in Figure 2. In the illustrated embodiment, the handle **60** includes an upper portion **64** and a lower portion **65**. The grasping portion **62** has an internal bore **66**. The lower portion **65** has a second internal bore **68** running the length of the handle **60** and one or more cutouts **70** which intersect the second internal bore **68** and accept the pivot link **62** (see below).

[0033] With reference to Figures 2 and 9, the handle **60** is also rotatably coupled to the clamping member or members **22**. In the illustrated embodiment, the handle **60** includes another bore **65** which accepts a rod (not shown) inserted therethrough and through an aperture (not shown) in the clamping member(s) **22**.

[0034] In operation, the handle **60** rotates the guide mechanism **58** about a pin **78**, which causes the pivoting arm **30** to move between the open position and the clamped position.

[0035] Referring to 2, a bending arm **80** is supported by the clamping member for engaging the work piece and bending the work piece to a desired angle. The bending arm **80** extends the length of the sheet bending brake assembly **20** and contacts the work piece **28** when rotated. The bending arm **80** may be hingedly connected with the lower

clamping surface **42**. The bending arm **80** may also have extensions (not shown) extending from the bending arm **80** for allowing easy rotation of the bending arm **80**.

[0036] The assembly **20** may further include a bend indicator (not shown) connected to the bending arm **80** for indicating a degree of rotation of the bending arm **80** during the bending of the work piece. The bend indicator (not shown) may include a displacement sensor (not shown) for measuring the degree of rotation of the bending arm **80** and a display device (not shown) for displaying the degree of rotation of the bending arm **80**. The bend indicator may be any type of electrical or mechanical device capable of measuring a degree of rotation.

[0037] The pivot link **62** is positioned within the pivoting arm **30** between the first and second arms **31A, 31B**. The pivoting arm **30** is moveable between an open position and a clamped position by pivoting about a bolt (not shown) while moving between the open position and the clamped position, as shown in Figures 2 and 3.

[0038] The pivot link **62** reacts between the clamping member **22**, as shown in Figure 2, and the pivoting arm **30** for moving the pivoting arm **30** between the open position and the clamped position. The pivot link **62** includes a body, generally indicated at **72**, that further includes top and bottom ends **74,76**, and side walls **78, 82**. The top end **74** of the pivot link **62** includes a channel **84**, defined therewithin to be pivotably connected within the handle **60** by a rod **86** inserted in the bore **68**. The handle **60**, as illustrated in Figures 2 and 3, functions to move the pivoting arm **30**, thereby rotating the pivot link **62**. The top portion of the sidewalls **78, 82** includes a distance therebetween less than the distance between the bottom portion of the side walls **78, 82**.

[0039] The bottom end **74** of the pivot link **62**, positioned within the pivoting arm **30** has a pocket **88** defined therewithin, and slots **90, 92**, respectively, defined within the sidewalls **78, 82** of the bottom end. The slots **90, 92** further define first and second ends

94,96, respectively, and inwardly extend from the side walls **78,82** of the bottom end **76** to the center line and are connected with the pocket **88**.

[0040] The pivot link **62** includes a spring mechanism **98** positioned within the pocket **88** extending internally from the bottom end **76** to the top end **74.** The pivot link **62** includes a bolt or threaded rod **100** and at least one nut **101** pivotably securing the bottom end **76** of the pivot link body **72** within the pivoting arm **30**. The bolt **100**, slided through the slots **90,82**, is positioned below the spring mechanism **98** to keep the spring mechanism **98** within the pocket **88**. In the close mode of operation of a brake assembly, the bolt **100** travels within the slots **90, 92** from the first end **94** to the second end **96**, compressing the spring mechanism **98**. In the open mode of operation of the brake assembly **20**, the bolt **98** travels from the second end **96** to the first end **94** releasing the spring mechanism **98** within the pocket **88**. As illustrated in Figures 2 and 3, the bolt **100** that adjusts the spring mechanism **98** between the open and the clamped positions of the brake assembly **20** and makes the pivot link **62** self-adjustable that eliminates the need of adjustment by an operator.

[0041] As shown in Figures, 1 and 3-7, in one embodiment the spring mechanism **98** includes a spring **102**.

[0042] In an alternative embodiment of the present invention, as illustrated in Figures 14 and 16, the pivot link **62** includes a bar **104**, having a cylindrical shape. The bar **104** is made from a resilient material, such as vulcanized rubber or an elastomer. The bar **104** includes first and second ends **106, 108**, wherein the second end **108** further includes a cavity (not shown) defined therewithin to receive a washer **110** embedded within the cavity and formed from a metal. The washer **110** contacts the bolt **100**. The bar **104** is positioned within the pocket **88** extending internally from the bottom end **76** towards the top end **74** of the body **72**.

[0043] The bolt **100**, slided through the slots **90, 92**, is positioned below the bar **104** to keep the bar **104** within the pocket **88**. In the close mode of operation of a brake assembly, the bolt **100** travels within the slots **90, 92** from the first end **94** to the second end **96**, compressing the bar **104**. In the open mode of operation of the brake assembly **20**, the bolt **100** travels from the second end **96** to the first end **94** releasing the bar **104** within the pocket **88**.

[0044] In one aspect of the present invention (shown in Figures 17 and 18), the pocket **88** includes a first portion **88A** and a second portion **88B**. The bar **104** is located primarily within the first portion **88A** when the sheet bending brake **20** is in the open position. When the brake 20 is closed, the bar **104** is compressed, as described above and a deformed portion of the bar **104** may be compressed within the second portion **88B**.

[0045] In one embodiment, the first portion **88A** has a cylindrical shape and the second portion **88B** has a conical shape. However, it should be noted that the present invention is not limited to any particular shape.

[0046] As appreciated by those skilled in the art, the bolt **100** that adjusts the bar **104** between the open and the clamped positions of the brake assembly **20**, as shown in Figures 8 and 9, makes the pivot link **62** self-adjustable that eliminates the need of adjustment by the operator.

[0047] Obviously, many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings. The invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described within the scope of the appended claims.